

THE FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE SITE.

By H. HEATHCOTE STATHAM [F.]

AS long as it was supposed to be the intention to erect additional buildings for the General Post Office business on the site of the old and now demolished Post Office, there could be only one rational method of treating the problem, whether from the point of view of architectural effect or of practical convenience—viz., to place the new building closer up to the existing one and to constitute the space between them a Post Office Yard; to cancel the road called St. Martin's-le-Grand, and to take the main traffic route to the east of the new building. To allow a main traffic route to interpose between two buildings erected for one purpose and forming parts of one great business institution, when it would be so easy to arrange it otherwise, seemed to me to be little short of insanity. This view I urged strongly in a letter to the *Times* three years ago, accompanied by a small plan to illustrate the scheme recommended.

Since then it is confidently reported that the Government have abandoned the idea of erecting a new Post Office on the site of the old one, and intend to decentralise the Post Office. My own impression is that, in that case, they are making a mistake, and that to make one great group of the Post Offices, on the method referred to above, would give the best result, both in an architectural and practical sense. If, however, we are to understand that the idea of a new Post Office building on that site is abandoned, the problem takes on an entirely new aspect. There is a large cleared space, on which buildings of some kind will be eventually erected. Are they to be planned so as to give the best architectural result and at the same time afford the opportunity for a great public improvement in a crowded centre of the City; or is the ground, according to the usual lamentable practice in London, to be covered with buildings as close as they can be packed, with no consideration but for the rental area to be derived from them?

A single glance at the plan of the site as existing shows what a wretchedly inadequate provision, both in regard to shape and area, is at present afforded by the triangular space between Newgate Street and Cheapside, to form the meeting-ground for three principal traffic routes. But we have to consider also what further demands are likely to be made upon it. It is of great importance that there should eventually be a new and more direct road from this quasi-central point to Liverpool Street Station; and, as Mr. Arthur Crow (I think) first pointed out, unless provision is made for this now, the ultimate result will be that we shall be told that there is no way of making such a street except by destroying Wren's church of St. Vedast. Again, if the proposed St. Paul's Bridge is ever built (as to which I have my doubts), there will have to be a new and wide street past the east end of St. Paul's to take the northward traffic from that problematical bridge. It is evident, therefore, that, if only to prevent the congestion of traffic, there will have to be a considerably larger open space here than at present exists. But here is the opportunity and the excuse for doing something more than merely providing adequate space for traffic—for making an important architectural improvement and adding a new feature to this part of London.

Referring now to the proposed plan for the treatment of the site, it may be first observed that assuming that our information is correct that no Post Office building is to be erected on the cleared

site, in that case there is no reason why St. Martin's-le-Grand should not continue to be the main thoroughfare northwards, only that it should be made a 90-feet street instead of a 70-feet one. Every opportunity should be taken of introducing wider streets, within reasonable limits. Newgate Street (50 feet) and Cheapside (60 feet), supposed to be adequate when they were first laid out, are both in the present day obviously too small for their traffic. Secondly, the south front of the new building should come into line with the Newgate Street angle of the Post Office building. It is contrary to all good principles in architectural street-planning that a building should be projected part way across the line of a street leading up to it, so that what is seen along the vista of the street is neither an open space nor the architectural centre of a building, but merely an angle of a building of which the remainder retires out of sight. In this plan the southern block of the new building carries on the line between Newgate Street on the west and the proposed new street on the east, which reflects, as it were, the angle of Newgate Street. The northern block of the new building is planned so as to emphasise the importance of Goldsmiths' Hall, the eastern façade of the building being of the same length as the Hall and parallel with it, and its central entrance is axial with the centre of the Hall. At the north-west angle of the new building one of the projecting pavilions is placed so as to form a terminating architectural feature along the axis of the street immediately north of the Post Office. The central area in this building is supposed to be only for light to communication corridors which would run round it; for this purpose it is ample; for light and air for offices in occupation it would be insufficient. The 20-feet top-lighted arcade between the north and south blocks of the new building would be very valuable for ground-floor shops, for which a high rental could probably be obtained; above that level the two buildings would stand separate.

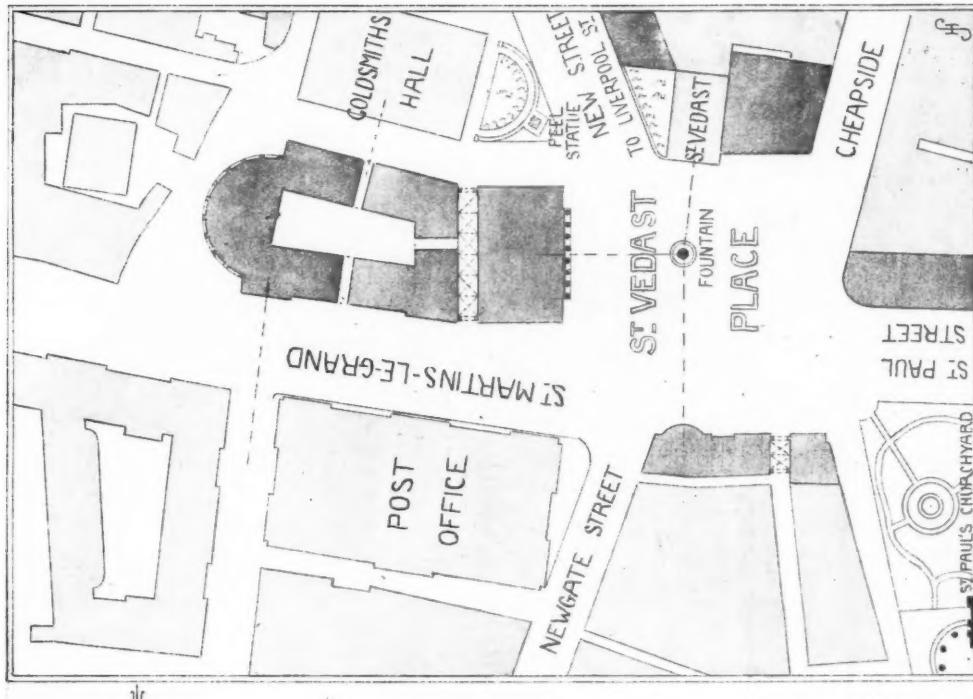
The proposed new 80-feet street leading to Liverpool Street Station entirely clears the church of St. Vedast, which may thus be considered to be preserved for ever, or, at least, for as long as it will last; and a small triangular space north of the church, between it and the street line, could be planted or laid out as a small garden. Similarly, the space left between Goldsmiths' Hall and the new street could be made a small semicircular garden, a treatment which would have the advantage of bringing Goldsmiths' Hall more into view than it is at present; and any opportunity of introducing a little foliage or a bit of garden into a city, in some small space which cannot be well-utilised for building, should always be made the best of. The Peel statue, which in the existing plan is obviously very much in the way, in the new plan is shown placed against the balustrade of the small semi-circular garden, in a position in which it cannot be in any one's way.

The buildings which in the existing plan project in front of the boundary of St. Paul's Churchyard, are shown as set back and rebuilt, thereby opening up St. Paul's a little more and making a more dignified west side to the proposed new Place.

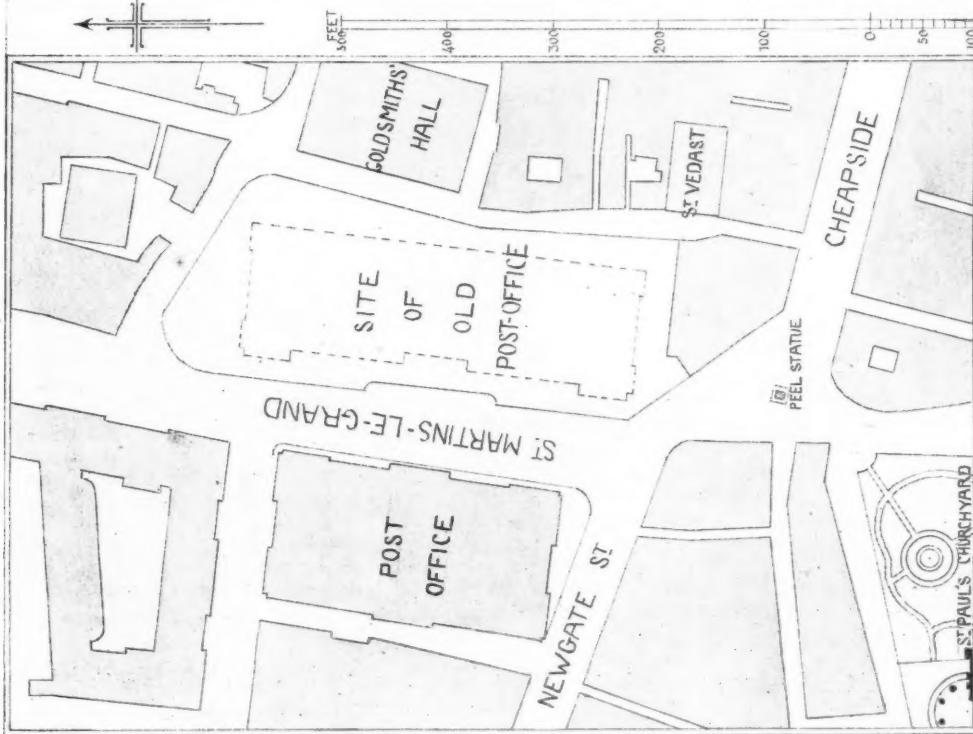
Whether the St. Paul's Bridge be ever carried out or not, a wider street to the east of the Cathedral, called here "St. Paul Street," would be very desirable, both for traffic and for giving increased dignity and space to the confines of the Cathedral, now much too closely hemmed in at the east end, and it would form an opportunity for getting rid of the commonplace row of business premises which have been erected to the east of the Cathedral, and which are quite unworthy of such a position.

A fountain or a monument (perhaps in the nature of a war memorial) might be erected in what we will call "St. Vedast Place," not, however, in the exact centre of the open space, but in such a position as to be axial with the centre line of the new building and with the centre line of St. Vedast Church, and thus have an architectural relation with its surroundings.

People who look upon all buildings in a city merely as rent-producing property will, of course, exclaim against such a plan as this, as involving a sinful waste of profitable building land; to which one can only reply that there are other values in a city besides those that can be stated in ground-rents, and of rather a higher nature; and until we can get that into the heads of corporations and corporate bodies there is little chance of any important improvement in the street architecture and street-



PROPOSED TREATMENT OF THE SITE. By H. H. STATHAM, F.R.I.B.A.



PRESENT STATE OF THE POST OFFICE SITE.

planning of London. In this instance there is an opportunity for a great public improvement, which may be lost for ever if the occasion is allowed to slip by without making the most of it.

ON SECRET PASSAGES.

By a COUNTRY ARCHITECT.

SECRET passages have a wonderful fascination for the human mind. They exist in multitudes all over the country, according to popular belief. There is not an ancient building but possesses at least one which leads either to the nearest church or else to whatever neighbouring edifice vies with it in antiquity. They connect buildings which are miles apart. In country places they pass under streams and through rocky hills. In towns they burrow beneath the sewers and cellars of crowded districts. No obstacle, either natural or artificial, seems to daunt them. So secret are they that no one has ever seen them; like Melchizedek, they have neither beginning nor end; none, at any rate, known to living man. But they are there: or at least they were there at some time, according to the information of the particular sexton or caretaker who has taken you in hand for instruction in the history of the building which he haunts for the time being.

Some years ago I stood on the top of a Border peel-tower in company with the owner and one or two friends. He was telling us the history of the little stronghold which the family had long deserted in favour of a more commodious dwelling built alongside in the eighteenth century.

"It was from here," he said, "that a daughter of our house was flung by her parents because she would not marry the man of their choice." Mild horror was expressed by the company. "Ah, you *must* obey your chieftain," he said. We looked over the parapet to see where the unfortunate lady fell. The tower stood on a rocky platform which sank steeply down to a stream; it was a most uncomfortable place on which to alight.

"By the way, do you see that house over there?" We eventually discovered in the distance, across the valley, a gleam of grey. "Well, there used to be a secret passage from this house to that—very useful when we were besieged." The company was vastly interested, for the passage must have burrowed beneath the stream and pursued its way through solid rock to its distant goal. Presently we descended as far as the principal chamber.

It need hardly be mentioned, perhaps, that these small peels contain, as a rule, but one room on each floor, with walls of great thickness. In one angle is a circular stone staircase leading from the basement up to the battlements and giving access to each storey: in the thickness of the walls are contrived one or two very small rooms.

Arrived at the principal chamber our guide

approached a small door. "I will show you how the secret passage was used. One of its chief purposes was to supply the besieged garrison with food, which was drawn up from it through a vertical shaft." So saying, he picked up several pieces of paper from a packet lying on an adjacent table and opened the door, disclosing an exceedingly small apartment. He lighted the paper and dropped piece after piece down a small shaft in the floor. "There, that's where they drew up the food." The ladies of the party were much impressed. Students of mediæval houses will realise, however, that the shaft was in fact a sort of prolongation of the human alimentary canal. The time was inopportune for conveying correct information on the subject; apart from which, our host's theory was much more agreeable and romantic than the truth.

Some year or two subsequently an estate agent wrote to me to ask if I were interested in secret passages, because he was going to investigate one in an ancient house under his charge, and would I come over and help? I complied with pleasure. It seems that a fire had caused some damage in the house, and the owner thought that the necessary process of reparation would afford a good opportunity of investigating two interesting things—the existence of a secret chamber, and the particulars of a secret passage connecting the mansion with the ruins of a still finer house some two miles off.

The origin of the fire was not without architectural interest. When the house was first built the great hall was provided with no fireplace, the fire being kindled on a hearth in the middle of the floor. The disposition of the roof timbers still indicates where the louvre stood which carried off the smoke. During the first half of the nineteenth century the then owner of the house built a new fireplace in a side wall and carried up a brick flue to the outer air. Someone subsequently built against this flue, on an upper storey, one of those little apartments which require a soil pipe. Regardless of what are now considered essential sanitary precautions, this apartment was contrived in a corridor in the middle of the house, its only contact with the outer air being at the top of a wide funnel which rose to the roof and was covered by a skylight. Such were early Victorian ways. The new flue, moreover, was jerry-built, and eventually caused the woodwork adjoining it to catch fire. Here was a pretty to-do—a fire started in the bowels of the mansion! Fortunately, with the help of the villagers, hastily summoned from morning service in the church, the fire was soon subdued, and incidentally opened a way for the investigation of the secret chamber and passage.

When I arrived on the scene a small group of

persons was assembled, comprising the agent himself, the oldest inhabitant of the village, the bailiff and a mason. The agent said that the owner, widow of the last lord, had told him that his lordship, on coming home once from hunting, had filled up the afternoon by rummaging about, and had penetrated into a secret room capable of holding fifty men. It lay somewhere beyond a certain large, dark closet or fuel-room. Then, besides this, there was the secret passage to which access was said to be obtained from a cupboard "behind the tiger in the hall."

The bailiff here spoke up, casting some doubt upon the existence of the passage; for, said he, if it led to the ancient ruin it must pass under the village street, and to his knowledge, although deep drains had been laid, no signs of such a passage had been found. Besides which, if it were, as supposed, two miles long (in order to arrive at the ruins), it must have been ventilated at intervals, and no traces of ventilating shafts were known to him.

But here the oldest inhabitant had his say, and in a cracked and quavering voice he told how, when they were digging years ago in the garden by the church-yard wall, they had come across a bit of a passage or something of the sort, built of dressed stone and arched over at a height of 7 feet or so. The fragment had been covered up again, but he could point out where it was. This information was an exhilarating set-off against the bailiff's doubts, and it was arranged that the remains of the passage should be found and exposed to view.

The company then moved off to look for the secret chamber, all but the oldest inhabitant, who was left sitting by the housekeeper's fire. Armed with a candle, we entered the dark fuel-room, and soon found a built-up recess in the wall. The quest began to grow exciting, and the mason eagerly hammered away at the recess. After a few minutes of hard work his hammer forced out a stone which fell into the dark void beyond. A few more minutes of breathless interest, and the hole was large enough for a person to pass. The mason went first to clear the way, the bailiff followed, then the agent, then myself. We were within the secret chamber! The feeble candle light, obstructed by the bodies of the explorers, revealed nothing but darkness. But there was a horrible smell. "Good Heavens," I cried, "let us get out of this, or we shall all be poisoned; if this isn't sewer gas, I don't know what is." So we all scrambled out again and sought the fresh air, leaving the secret chamber to get a little ventilation through the new opening. After an interval the mason was sent in again to reconnoitre, and, as he reported the atmosphere to be bearable, we clambered back, and explored the dark space. It accommodated us four, it is true, but we found that we nearly filled it. By the dim light we discovered the brick flue of the hall fireplace, and close to it a soil

pipe, which a very slight examination showed to be riddled with holes. Far over our heads was the burnt woodwork where the fire started.

It was soon obvious what the secret chamber really was. At some time in the eighteenth century an oblong room had had its angles rounded off by large curved partitions of lath and plaster; the space into which we had penetrated was one of the portions thus cut off. It was a useless space which the plumber no doubt thought was admirably adapted for the passage of his soil pipe. So vanished the secret chamber.

But this was not all. It seems that, much to everyone's surprise, the smoke of the conflagration had found its way in large volumes to her ladyship's bedroom, which was in another part of the ground floor. So I said to the agent, "Where that smoke could go, the sewer gas can go. You had better have the drains examined." And the end of the Adventure of the Secret Chamber was the rearrangement of the sanitary accommodation and the relaying of the whole drainage system.

There still remained the secret passage to investigate. Time was required, however, to unearth the fragment deposited to by the oldest inhabitant, and further exploration was deferred for a few days. At my next visit I found that the fragment had been discovered and laid bare. The old man's memory had not played him false. There were the dressed stone walls carrying the remains of a segmental vault at a height of about 7 feet. The width between the two side walls which carried the vault was about 6 feet, quite a convenient width for a passage. But the remains of these walls were very short, and the third wall (at right angles) must have ended the passage abruptly and without any obvious reason. It was out of the question that such a means of communication could have ended or started in the middle of nowhere, and a brief examination sufficed to dispel the idea that here was a fragment of a secret passage, and to substitute for it the more prosaic probability that the remnants were those of a cesspool.

All hope was not yet dead, for there still remained the cupboard "behind the tiger in the hall." Thither accordingly we went. The tiger—a fine stuffed animal—stood on a table at the end of the hall, and looked as though he had stood there unmoved for half a century. With reverent care we moved him away, and then the heavy table. Behind him, hitherto concealed by his huge body, we discovered a small door in the panelling—very small, thought I, to be the entrance to a secret passage. At a distance of some 10 feet on each side of the cupboard the wall containing it was pierced by a doorway. I pointed out to the agent that the beginning of the passage must be very steep to enable it to dive under either of these doorways, for the bottom of the cupboard was quite 4 feet from the floor. "True," he replied, "but we may as

well make sure." The thickness of the wall could be ascertained at the doorways. It was certainly thick, but still would only allow, at a liberal calculation, about a foot and a half for the width of the passage. "It may be thicker where the cupboard is," said the agent; "we cannot get to the back of it." So the mason set to work hammering at the stone wall which formed the back. It sounded hollow compared with those at the sides, and hope still flickered in our bosoms. At length, as formerly, a stone was dislodged, and the mason's hammer plunged into a dark void. Eagerly we rushed to examine the result.

The mason had broken into the flue from the heating apparatus in the basement.

Thus closed another chapter in the romance of an ancient house.

REVIEWS.

RIVINGTON'S BUILDING CONSTRUCTION.

Rivington's Notes on Building Construction: a Book of Reference for Architects and Builders and a Text-book for Students. In two volumes, Parts I. and II., edited by W. Noble Twelvetrees, new edition, entirely rewritten, with 879 illustrations. 8o. Lond. 1915. Price 7s. 6d. net per volume. [Longmans, Green & Co., 39 Paternoster Row.]

The position occupied by *Rivington's Building Construction* is one almost unequalled in the field of technical literature. For the past forty years it has been universally recognised as the most authoritative text-book on the subject of construction as affecting building work. Hitherto it has run through edition after edition without showing any great departures from the scope and arrangement of the original volumes. Now, however, the publishers have decided in favour of a complete revision, and the first two parts, which deal with general construction, apart from the questions of materials and structural mechanics, are the subject of this review.

Until the present issue the authorship of *Rivington's* has been anonymous, the title being derived from the name of the original publishers, and it would seem that the authority of the book has gained rather than otherwise by this circumstance. In the present edition not only has anonymity of authorship been thrown to the winds, but the work no longer bears the impress of a single mind. The two volumes under review comprise signed contributions by about twenty writers under the general editorship of Mr. Twelvetrees. While by this arrangement there is a certain loss of uniformity of treatment, which is a disadvantage from the standpoint of an elementary student, the result is more interesting and far more stimulating to a person already possessed of a fair knowledge of the subject. For this reason, and in consequence also of the very much wider scope of the present volumes as compared with the previous ones, it may be anticipated that *Rivington's* in future will be considered the text-book of the advanced rather than of the elementary student.

In addition to undertaking the obviously very arduous work of general editor, Mr. Twelvetrees is responsible for several chapters dealing with subjects of an engineering character. His contributors are, without exception, well versed in the subjects on which they write, many of them being well-known authorities on building construction. Each volume contains an interesting introduction by Mr. Reginald Blomfield, R.A. [Past President R.I.B.A.], in which he lays emphasis on the fact that, although good construction is by no means necessarily good architecture, it is an essential foundation for it, and must be mastered in all its details by the would-be competent architect.

Part I. commences with a very useful chapter on Building Regulations (Mr. Brook Kitchin [F.]), an important subject which has hitherto received scant attention in works dealing with construction. While the summarised treatment adopted is on the whole exceedingly good, it is in a few instances open to criticism. In the summary given of the important cases in which there is a right of appeal from the decision of the responsible authority in London, no mention is made of the rights of appeal under the London Building Acts (Amendment) Act 1905, which deals with means of escape in case of fire. Also, as regards the provincial building law, although several local Acts of the larger provincial towns are mentioned, there is no reference to the much more important Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1883 (Building in Streets), which regulates the building line of new buildings in practically all extra-metropolitan districts.

The chapters in Part I. dealing with general "carcase" construction of ordinary character under the headings of Sites and Foundations (Mr. H. V. Lanchester [F.]); Brickwork (Professor Beresford Pite [F.]); Masonry (Mr. W. Douglas Caroe [F.]); Walls, Piers and Retaining Walls (Messrs. H. W. Wills [F.] and C. Lovett Gill [A.]); Arches, Vaulting, and Domes (Mr. A. W. S. Cross [F.]); Chimneys and Stove Setting (Mr. W. Pywell [F.]); Carpentry (Mr. W. T. Sweet); Partitions (Mr. Alan E. Munby [F.]), all well sustain and in many cases exceed the high standard set by the writer of the original *Rivington's*. The same applies also in the case of the chapters in Part II. which deal with Timber Roofs (Mr. W. T. Sweet); Roof Coverings and Structural Plumbing (Mr. W. S. Purchon [A.]); Joinery (Mr. Matt Garbutt [F.]); and Stairs and Staircases (Mr. W. E. Riley [F.]). The writer on Timber Roofs deals very fully with his subject, and the illustrations given of advanced types of roof, including one of a wooden dome, will be very useful for reference in practical work. The detail of a hammer-beam roof is, however, of a very sketchy character. This type of roof, still used to a considerable extent in church work, is well worthy of detailed illustration, but has hardly yet received proper attention from the writers of text-books. The chapters on Joinery are exceedingly well written and illustrated. The subject is dealt with in a very thorough and logi-

cal manner, from the workshop processes of sawing, planing, moulding, and jointing the members, to the placing of the finished article in the building, together with all requisite fittings and furniture. If the whole of the new edition were up to the same standard as this section, it would indeed be a wonderful work. The chapter on Stairs and Staircases deals not only with ordinary stairs of wood and stone, but also contains a few useful notes on iron and steel stairs, on the construction of which the ordinary architectural draughtsman is often somewhat "at sea."

The temporary work involved in building construction is dealt with in Part I. under the headings of Timbering Excavations, Shoring, and Underpinning (Professor C. H. Reilly [F.] and Mr. Patrick Abercrombie [A.]) ; Scaffolding (Mr. Twelvetrees) ; Centres and Moulds (Mr. A. W. S. Cross [F.]). Generally speaking, these sections are sound work, but the illustrations with regard to centering for arches are hardly as complete and explicit as could be desired. They would be much improved by the addition of sections, and by the dimensioning of the spans, and the figuring of the scantlings of the members.

In Part I. are included chapters on Iron and Steel Work and on Steel Skeleton Buildings (Mr. E. Fiander Etchells [*Hon. A.*]). The first of these contains much useful and interesting matter. The portion dealing with riveting is particularly sound and clear, although the writer has doubtless felt himself awkwardly restricted in his treatment by the fact that the question of stresses, upon which, of course, the number, size, and spacing of the rivets principally depend, is reserved to be dealt with separately in Part IV. The chapter dealing with Steel Skeleton Buildings is also interesting, but, from the standpoint of the student, could have been improved by the addition of fully figured illustrations showing the construction of an all-steel building of the type largely used for engineering workshops. A further chapter by the same writer dealing with Steel Roofs occurs in Part II., and contains good detailed illustrations. This, and the section on Timber Roofs, is prefaced by a chapter written by Mr. Twelvetrees, which deals with points common to roofs of all materials.

The remaining chapters in Part I. are written by Mr. Twelvetrees and deal with Damp- and Sound-Resisting Construction ; Reinforced Concrete ; and Fire-Resisting Construction. The first of these contains good material, the usefulness of which, however, is greatly discounted by the lack of illustrations. The chapter on Reinforced Concrete is quite a good summary of the subject. That on Fire-Resisting Construction deals not only with the actual formation of floors, pillars, and other units of construction, but also includes very useful notes on fire-resisting design—a subject the importance of which rarely receives proper recognition.

The remaining chapters are in Volume II. That dealing with Plastering (Professor C. H. Reilly [F.] and Mr. Patrick Abercrombie [A.]) seems good as far

as the letterpress is concerned, but there is not a single illustration. In a treatise for the use of students it seems very unfortunate that the aid of the illustrator has not been invoked to deal with such subjects as the formation of zinc cornice moulds, the running of a cornice, and the bracketing of large cornices. The written word by itself seems inadequate to deal with constructional items of this kind. The subjects of Painting, Decorating, and Paperhanging are dealt with by Mr. Twelvetrees in a satisfactory manner, having regard to the rather restricted amount of space allowed for these subjects. It is a pity, however, that the first coat of paint after the priming should have been described as "the second coat," and the one after that the third and so on, having regard to the custom in specifications to describe the number of coats specified as additional to the priming.

The questions of Drainage and Sewage Disposal (Mr. W. Kaye-Parry [F.]) are the subject of a well-written chapter with good illustrations. The writer mentions that Roman cement has been extensively employed in Ireland for pipe jointing, and he appears rather to favour it for this purpose on account of its quick-setting properties. In dealing with Portland cement the old rule that it should be spread out and cooled before use is still set forth ; but this practice is now rarely adopted, and with some cement might have a prejudicial effect by producing the air slaking of the material. The subjects of Water Supply, Plumbing, Sanitation, and Sanitary Fittings (Major H. Phillips Fletcher [F.]) are fairly well dealt with, but possibly have suffered a little in their treatment by the engagement of the writer on military duties. It is rather curious to find that, although waste pipes are fully described under a special heading, the references to soil pipes are scattered over several pages, and the word "soil pipe" does not appear in the index under either of its two heads. Heating and Ventilation, and Hot-Water Supply (Mr. A. H. Barker) are well treated. In the portion dealing with heating and ventilation the writer has steered a very successful middle course between the two extremes of an over-elaborate scientific treatment and a treatise on first principles only. The information given is of sound, practical value, and the explanations are very clear. The treatment of hot-water supply, having regard to the importance of the subject to everyone concerned in house construction, might have been a little amplified. For instance, in the diagram of the cylinder system, the cylinder is shown to be placed horizontally instead of vertically, and the cold feed pipe is shown to be connected to the return pipe of the primary circulation instead of to the cylinder. Both of the arrangements shown, particularly the horizontal placing of the cylinder, are considered undesirable by many heating engineers, and it would have been well if some arguments in favour of the methods adopted had been advanced.

The subjects of Gas and Electric Lighting, Electric Bells, Telephones, and Lightning Conductors are

dealt with in a very full manner by Mr. Twelvetrees. The illustrations of these sections are to a considerably larger scale than those of the remainder of the volumes, and it is rather a pity that they were not reduced somewhat, and the space thus saved made available in other sections where some of the illustrations are rather too small in scale.

Part II. concludes with a chapter on Fire Equipment (Sidney G. Gamble). This is a good, although very unusual feature in a work on building construction, and is one which specially appeals to practising architects, as there is very little literature dealing with the subject.

Each of the volumes has a fairly comprehensive index and contains also an Appendix consisting of selected examination questions of the principal societies and bodies that conduct examinations in building construction. Considered as a whole, although there is a certain unevenness in the standard achieved by the various writers, the two Parts of the new edition are a distinct success. They are a mine of information on subjects connected with building, and reflect considerable credit on the editor and his numerous contributors.

HORACE CUBITT [A.]

THE WORK OF THE BROTHERS ADAM.

Robert Adam and His Brothers : Their Lives, Work, and Influence on English Architecture, Decoration and Furniture. By John Swarbrick, A.R.I.B.A. 4o. Lond. 1916. £2 2s. net. [B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 94 High Holborn.]

Messrs. Batsford's latest production, which gives the keynote of sumptuousness and expensiveness of that famous publishing house, proclaims its parentage aloud. An increasing striving to produce in each case the most beautiful type, illustrations, and binding are doubtless to be commended. Such masterpieces as the Dilettanti Society's publications, Stuart and Revett's *Athens*, and Robert and James Adam's *Works in Architecture*—which latter is without doubt the finest architectural publication yet achieved, and that some hundred years ago—are models to be respectfully followed. Yet there is apparently an increasing tendency to produce architectural books in competition with popular magazines, to be read, laid aside, and forgotten : a leavening of anecdotes for the general reader, illustrations more beautiful as picturesque views than useful architecturally—in fact, a revival of the "Gems of Scenery" and sentimental art annuals of the early nineteenth century. Such works are not commenced in any critical spirit ; they give bare descriptions, dates, and costs, with client's and private letters reverently reproduced—in fact, it almost seems that the immense advance in illustrative processes outweighs the value of the letterpress and that these beautiful books are produced solely for display. As a matter of fact, private details count for little ; the breadth of an architect's mind is written upon his monuments—there is no need to search archives for that. The strength of Robert Adam's character, and

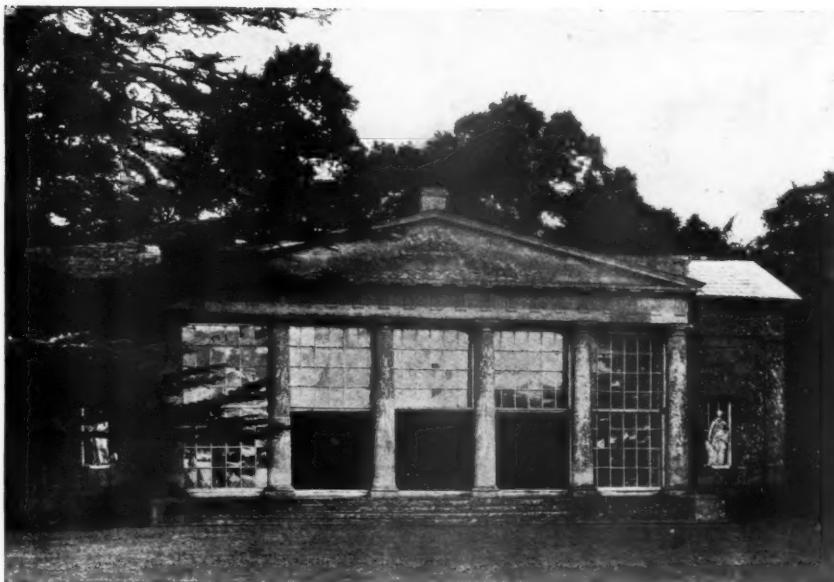
his great obstinacy, are apparent to all ; his failure at large handling, except in rare cases, his excessive thinness, seen at its worst externally, are defects which reflect their author. See also his austerity of interior work, and its attendant need for rigorous furniture, mincing manners, and stiff respectability ; no comfort or indecorous attitudes—even those voluptuous couches and the bacchanalian feasts of the Greco-Roman period, which inspired Adam's later work, are debarred.

The author prepared originally an essay on "The Work of Robert Adam," which was awarded the Architectural Association Prize in 1903, and this book is the outcome of its elaboration. In the introduction he gives a general sketch of architecture of the Renaissance, showing influences likely to be felt by the brothers, and proceeds with a sketch of their training and early life. Robert Adam visited Italy in 1754, at the age of twenty-four. He there made the acquaintance of Piranesi and Clérissau, and prepared the drawings for his book on the Palace of Diocletian at Spalato, although this was not published until ten years later.

Generally speaking, the letterpress leaves a great deal to be desired. In referring to buildings, the author has an irritating way of giving vague descriptions of such important things as the principal rooms—for instance, "The Yellow Drawing Room, Red Drawing Room, the Garden Room, and the Ballroom, 91 feet long and 37 feet wide," details which convey nothing ; also frequent references to other buildings not illustrated, equally futile unless one is familiar with either example. One also notes a repetition of the same quotation in different chapters. Descriptions are never other than meagre, and no criticism at all is attempted. The descriptions generally take the following form : "The chimney-piece resembles in general arrangement those . . . at Kedleston, Hope-toun and Stratford, now Derby House" ; or, speaking of Kedleston, "The Entrance Hall and Rotunda are the most spacious and lofty apartments in the house, rising two storeys in height. The height to the top of the coved plaster ceiling of the Entrance Hall is 39 feet, and the height to the top of the Saloon dome measured internally is 55 feet." Again, "The long low seats under the niches of the walls are believed to have been designed by Robert Adam. Their form is supposed to have been suggested by ancient sarcophagi"—being extremely non-committal. There are also too many references to drawings in the Soane Museum ; reference should be confined as far as possible to illustrations.

The illustrations are numerous and of fine quality, but, notwithstanding the enormous amount of ornament and furniture produced in the name or under the style of Adam, the number of details given is very small, nor are they of very representative character.

The bridge to Syon House exhibits a curious ramp towards the middle arch which is objectionable, conveying no sense of the incline of the roadway, and more



GREENHOUSE, CROOME COURT, WORCESTERSHIRE.



BOARD OF TRADE OFFICES, WHITEHALL (now demolished).
(Formerly the Offices of the Paymaster-General.)



suitable for staircases than stonework. The same idea is repeated in the bridge at Ayr. The ceilings (Figs. 17 and 134) exhibit strongly the influence of the Villa Madama, with the difference that a vaulted motive is applied to a flat ceiling, whilst those of Syon House and Croome Court are similar to those of the Palazzo Vecchio and other Italian examples. There is throughout the lighter ceilings a manifest striving for segmental lines, as though the motives had been taken originally from vaulted roofs. The ironwork, fireplaces, doorways, fanlights, &c., are of great magnificence and one could not have enough of them. From Croome Court are given a very successful greenhouse and rotunda, on airy lines and without that stiffness which gradually settled upon the style.

The garden front at Kedleston typifies the changes introduced by the Adams externally, and is perhaps better than their later work, as showing more life and vigour, a fine play of light and shade, and ornament not too attenuated. In later houses, such as Lansdowne House and Kenwood, the ornament externally is confined to severe anthemion or fluting in the members only.

Internally, Adam is at his best. He at first follows the domed or coved ceilings of the earlier eighteenth century, but later discarded all in favour of flat or slightly segmental lines which gave more scope for his Pompeian or so-called Etruscan arabesques. Many of the ceilings have a tendency to be all over alike, and the relief afforded by the painted panels is too abrupt or too widely spaced to be quite happy. The gradual flattening of all relief is very apparent in these photographs.

Syon House is undoubtedly Adam's masterpiece as far as interior work goes. The detail is full, more colours are employed, more strong spacing and relief and richness of materials (marble columns and floors, polished doors and gilt). The vestibule (Fig. 108) is extremely fine, as also are the Hall and Red Drawing Room. The Library at Kenwood is less rich but equally admirable, beautifully proportioned and detailed. The sedan chairs of Queen Charlotte and Lady Williams Wynn are delightful, the latter being about the last word in refinement.

The plans given are unfortunately too few, but they show the advances made by the brothers, although the repetition of segmental ends, as at Lord Derby's house and elsewhere, is too great a play upon a single motive.

The book concludes with work in Edinburgh and Glasgow, begun later in life and completed by other hands. Stratford House (Figs. 84, 184, 187), of which Adam's authorship is doubtful, provides two or three examples of the most charming refinement, displaying

a delicacy of touch and a simplicity which is unsurpassed.

The book will undoubtedly prove to be of great service, particularly as it is the first monograph on this very distinctive style. The author's know-



SEDAN CHAIR MADE FOR LADY WILLIAMS WYNNE.

ledge of his subject is evidently of very great depth and shows a thorough mastery of available material; but it is to be regretted that he did not write more from a critical standpoint, though this might perhaps have produced too bulky a volume.

The publishers are to be congratulated upon the unvarying excellence of their publications, and whatever criticism one may find with this work—which criticism, it must be admitted, chiefly consists in not having enough of it—the publishers have produced a notable addition to architectural literature.

ROBERT ATKINSON [F.]



GILBERT MARSHALL MACKENZIE, B.A. Cantab., *Associate*,
Captain, Seaforth Highlanders.
Killed in action (see p. 226).



THOMAS PAUL BAUSOR, *Associate*,
Second Lieutenant, Shropshire Light Infantry.
Killed in action (see p. 225).



ADRIAN THOMAS HARDMAN, *Student*,
Lieutenant, Royal Fusiliers.
Died of wounds (see p. 211).



LOUIS AUGUSTUS PHILIPS, *Associate*,
Sergeant, Public Schools Bn., Royal Fusiliers.
The Rugby Football International Player.
Killed in action (see p. 159).





9 CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W., 20th May 1916.

ARCHITECTS AND MILITARY SERVICE.

A number of members of the Royal Institute of British Architects who are about to enlist in the Army or to be summoned to the Colours under the operation of the Military Service Acts have called the attention of the Council to the desirability of making arrangements to enable them to enlist in a selected Corps, so that they will have the advantage of serving with a number of men of their own class and profession. With the approval of the Central Recruiting Dépôt arrangements have accordingly been made with the Queen's Westminster Rifles, one of the oldest and most distinguished of the London Territorial Regiments. Applicants must, of course, be fit for general service and must be capable of passing the tests imposed by the Regiment. Any members (whether attested or unattested) who desire to take advantage of this opportunity should apply *immediately* to the Officer Commanding, Administrative Centre, Queen's Westminster Rifles, 58 Buckingham Gate, S.W. They are invited to call on any week day (except Saturday) at 2 p.m., and they should state that they desire to take advantage of the arrangements made with the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The R.I.B.A. Record of Honour: Twenty-ninth List.

The following is the Twenty-ninth List of Members, Licentiates, and Students R.I.B.A. serving with the Forces, the total to date being 60 Fellows, 445 Associates, 242 Licentiates, and 273 Students:—

FELLOW.

Poynter, Ambrose : Lieutenant R.N.V.R.

ASSOCIATES.

Colville, David : Sergt., 24th Bn. Victoria Rifles, 2nd Canadian Contingent.
 Cooper, J. G. : 28th Bn. Royal Fusiliers.
 Douglass, H. A. : Captain, B.E.F., France.
 Dovaston, John : R.N.A.S. (Anti-Aircraft Corps).
 Hampson, Joseph L. : 1st City San. Co., R.A.M.C.
 Kenchington, Herbert : Civil Service Rifles.
 Kipps, P. K. : R.N.V.R.
 Knight, F. W. : 195th Bn. Canadian Exp. Force.
 Neave, S. : Royal Engineers, Australian Exp. Force.
 Walker, T. : Royal Garrison Artillery.
 Wilson, H. J. : Royal Engineers.

LICENTIATES.

Barker, Walter C. : Royal Garrison Artillery.
 Caryer, G. T. : Royal Engineers.

Cotman, Grahame : 3/2 East Anglian Field Ambulance, R.A.M.C.
 Evans, E. Hollyer : Royal Field Artillery.
 Knapman, H. L. : Royal Engineers.
 Lunan, T. M. : 2nd Lieut. 3/8th Scottish Rifles.
 Moffat, B. : Royal Naval Air Service.
 Puntin, J. H. : Durham Light Infantry.
 Ross, R. T. : Royal Engineers.

Promotions.

Lieut.-Col. A. B. Hubback [F.] serving in France, who was recommended for gallant and distinguished service in the field in Sir John French's Despatch of the 30th November last, has been promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General.

Lieut. J. G. Hudson Holdgate, R.E. [Licentiate], has been promoted to Captain, R.E., dating from 31st January.

Mr. H. V. Lawton [Student] has been promoted to Full Lieutenant R.E. Bridging Train.

The "Irish Builder" on the Devastation of Dublin.

The *Irish Builder* for the 13th May should be consulted for a detailed and admirably illustrated description of the devastation in Dublin which has resulted from the recent lamentable events in Ireland. The journal itself has suffered the loss of its offices in Lower Abbey Street, the building having been totally destroyed by fire; and the home of its distinguished next-door neighbour, the Royal Hibernian Academy, has met a similar fate, together with its valuable collection of miniatures and other works of art, the library, records, the series of portraits of R.H.A. Presidents extending back for nearly a century, and the pictures of the annual exhibition then being held. It is noted with pleasure that no member of the architectural profession has suffered in life or limb. Mr. Harry Allberry [A.], of the Office of Public Works, had a narrow escape, being one of the Veterans' Volunteer Corps (the G.R.'s) who came under heavy fire at the outset of the disturbances, when four or five lost their lives and ten others were wounded. The actual damage, extensive as it is, has been almost entirely confined to the Sackville Street area. Fortunately, the loss to the city of buildings of historic or architectural interest has been surprisingly small. Giving some impressions of the scene, the Engineering Correspondent says:—

It was an awesome experience to visit the devastated area after quiet had been restored. Rumours of frightful conflagrations and bombardments had reached the suburbs, while the skies at night bore witness to their truth. But even the most imaginative mind must have failed to conjure up such a scene of desolation as now exists in the centre of the city. Gaunt walls with staring apertures serve as tottering monuments of great business houses which three weeks ago were humming hives of commerce. Architecture is converted into heaps of builders' rubbish. The General Post Office, a building renowned for its beauty and associations throughout the world, is but a shell; the new public office, upon which so much labour and money has been expended, and which had just been opened, is no more. The only structure in the whole fire-swept zone that is still standing is that block of the Post Office which was erected some six years ago in Princes Street, the walls and floors of which to the ordinary observer appear to be practically intact. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the floors and roof are cracked and shaken, but their fire-resisting qualities have undoubtedly saved the larger building in which they were situated from collapse. This

seems to be all that has been saved from the wreckage, and is a striking testimony to the value of fire-resisting construction in which the steelwork is protected from the direct action of the flame by a casing of plaster or similar material. In other cases exposed girders and stanchions have expanded and twisted with the heat, and the superimposed brickwork and masonry have utterly collapsed.

It has been suggested that the reduction of the insurgents garrisoning the houses in this area might have been effected by less drastic methods. This view, however, is not shared by competent and impartial observers. Rifle fire, while dangerous to non-combatants, was not effective against protected sharpshooters in well-chosen positions, and a process of starvation, against determined men provisioned with a certain amount of rations, would have been very slow indeed, and have involved the starvation of thousands of innocent non-combatants. As it was, these suffered very severely. The general opinion seems to be that the methods adopted were inevitable in the circumstances.

Some consolation, however, is derived from the rebellion. The leading article says:—

The homely saying, "It's no use crying over spilt milk," applies very forcibly in this instance. It is for the citizens to apply themselves vigorously to getting things going again, and to rebuild what has been destroyed. . . . If what has happened means much loss to the traders of the areas affected, it will, on the other hand, bring some much-needed work to the Dublin building trade and the architectural profession. We may with some degree of hope look forward to seeing a newer and finer Sackville Street arise from the ashes of the old. . . . A unique and unexpected opportunity is afforded for putting into practice the true principles of town planning, and we trust that when the time comes all those concerned will combine to give Dublin a piece of architecture worthy of this historic street, and an improvement on the nondescript patch-work collection of houses which formerly made up the facades.

Another writer says:—

We conceive it to be the duty of the Corporation, and of the Institute of Architects in turn to press upon them that duty, to see to it that when the time comes the rebuilding of Lower Sackville Street be undertaken in a manner worthy of that noble thoroughfare and of the metropolis of Ireland. . . . In face of the disaster which has befallen the owners and occupiers of this property, there will be in many cases a temptation to rebuild in a cheap and flimsy manner to meet the needs of the moment. This should not be permitted. If temporary structures are necessary, let them be frankly temporary—corrugated iron, expanded metal, or the like—and removed as circumstances permit. But in regard to buildings intended to be permanent, a uniform scheme should be adopted. We do not mean that every householder should be compelled to erect a replica of his neighbour's house. . . . Neither do we suggest that traders should be forced to build elaborate art stone frontages; but measures should be taken to prevent one man building a roasting red brick and yellow terra-cotta house, his neighbour a limestone building, the man next that again a stucco front, then perhaps granite, and maybe a Portland-stone-fronted bank beyond that to relieve the monotony. . . . To our mind it would be very fitting for the Institute of Architects in Ireland to give a lead in these matters. No other body can speak with a like authority, and we do not believe that there is a single person who would resent such action.

Civic Arts Association Competition for Memorial Designs.

The detailed Conditions are now published of this Competition, a preliminary notice of which, with particulars of the prizes and subjects of competition, appeared in the last issue of the JOURNAL (pp. 231-32).

Each of the eight classes will be judged by a jury of not less than three chosen by the executive from amongst a number of distinguished architects, sculptors, and painters. Drawings and models must be sent in by Monday, the 10th July. The prize designs and such others as may be chosen for the purpose will be exhibited by the Civic Arts Association at the R.I.B.A. Galleries during the month of July. The Association reserves the right to exhibit selected designs in the provinces after the London Exhibition. The prizes are independent of any commission payable for the use of the designs after execution. Copies of the Conditions may be obtained on application to the Secretary, Civic Arts Association, 28 Prince's Gardens, S.W. A P.O. for 1s. and a stamped and addressed envelope must be sent with the application, but the P.O. will be returned on the receipt of a *bona-fide* design.

From the fuller details now available a very interesting competition may be expected in Class I. The subject is a Design for a Monument suitable for erection in the centre of the members' courtyard at the new County Hall in commemoration of employees of the London County Council who have fallen in the War. A cross is to form part of the design, and the symbolism is to be religious. The general character of the monument is to be sculptural rather than architectural, but with due regard to its setting. The view of the entrance doors from the Westminster Bridge Road must not be too much obstructed. The cost of the monument must not be unduly large. It is stated that the London County Council is in no way committed either to the memorial or to the designs which may win the prize, but the Civic Arts Association will submit the prize designs to the London County Council for its consideration. The materials of the monument are to be Portland or Purbeck stone, or stone and bronze, not marble. The drawings are to include plan and one or more elevations to a scale of half an inch to the foot, and such other details to a larger scale as the competitors may desire. Competitors may also submit a perspective drawing or a model, or both. The first prize is £50; the second, £15.

Classes II., III., IV., and V. are designs for Wall Tablets, prizes being offered by Messrs. J. W. Singer & Sons, Frome; Messrs. Martyn, Cheltenham; Mr. H. A. Bartlett, Chairman of Messrs. Battiscombe & Harris. The prize-givers in these classes reserve to themselves the right to carry out any design submitted on payment to the designer of royalties of 10 per cent. on the value of all tablets executed from the designs.

Class VI. consists of Designs for a Wall Painting, such as might be carried out in the hall of a Boys' Club or Board School to commemorate members or scholars fallen in the War. The subject may be either religious, allegorical, legendary, or an actual scene in modern warfare. Designs should be suitable for carrying out either (a) in fresco, tempera, or in some washable material on the walls; (b) in oil or tempera on canvas, or in tempera or body colour on paper stretched over canvas, in removable frames.

Class VII. consists of a Fountain, architectural or sculptural, or a combination, for an open site in a country town or village, in memory of the local soldiers who have lost their lives in the War. Estimated cost of execution not to exceed £200. The Right Hon. Charles Booth offers prizes of £20 and £5.

Class VIII. consists of Inexpensive Memorials for the

"Home," such as tablets, medallions, frames for Rolls of Honour and photographs, caskets for mementoes or stands for holding medals, etc. The best submitted will be exhibited in the hope that manufacturers will enter into negotiation with the authors with a view to reproduction. These inexpensive memorials should be capable of being made in quantities at prices varying from 5s. to £2 each.

The proprietors of *Country Life* place at the disposal of the Jury £25 and six copies of Mr. Lawrence Weaver's *Memorials and Monuments* as consolation prizes for award to designs other than those gaining First and Second Prizes which show merit in any class.

THE LATE ROBERT ALEXANDER BRIGGS [F.]

I feel sure that many old members of the Institute and Architectural Association will be genuinely sorry to hear of the death of Mr. R. A. Briggs, which took place in London on Wednesday, 10th May. The sad event must have come as a shock to his architectural friends, to whom he has been familiarly known for many years past as "Bungalow Briggs."

I first made Briggs's acquaintance in the year 1889, while travelling in France on my Soane Medallion tour. This chance meeting took place in the old Cathedral town of Chartres, and partly owing to the circumstance that he was the Soane Medallist of some five years' priority we then started a lasting friendship.

Briggs was a man of marked personality, rapid in thought and quick of action. His keen sense of wit, combined with a genial disposition, never failed to make an impression on all who came in contact with him. He was an extremely well-read man, a brilliant conversationalist, a talented musician and composer of songs. These attainments and gifts attracted many people to him.

He made a good host and was never happier than when he had a few friends gathered round him for a musical evening. On these occasions he was a willing accompanist on the piano, but he always maintained that his favourite instrument was the organ, and used to speak of the old days when he conducted the service in the school chapel at Sherborne. As well as being musically inclined, Briggs, when opportunity occurred, was fond of shooting and fishing. His keen personal interest in everything he undertook is exemplified by his useful invention of the "Fly and Cast Box" well known to sportsmen.

He started practice as an architect in 1884, and, coming of a large family not very well provided for, he was obliged to devote all his energies to his profession, for which he was well equipped, being a splendid draughtsman and colourist, besides being endowed with exceedingly good business qualities. His practical mind concentrated on improving the designs and plans of small country residences at a time when this class of building was almost entirely the production of the local builder. Within seven years of starting his practice he had produced quite a large number of bungalows and small houses, built chiefly on country estates, such as Bellaggio, in Surrey.

Having succeeded so far, the idea occurred to Briggs to publish his bungalow designs in book form and thus supply a want which he then maintained had not hitherto been filled by previous works on the same lines. In the preface to his book Briggs asks, "What is a bungalow?" and then proceeds in his characteristic way to say, "A cottage is a little house in the country, but a bungalow is a little country house, a homely, cosy little place, with verandahs and balconies." The first edition of *Bungalows and Country Residences* came out in 1891 and, since that date, under various titles, this successful little book has extended into no fewer than five editions.

Briggs's literary and artistic attainments led him to write numerous articles on architecture and decoration. An article on "Designs for Pianoforte Cases," published in *Furniture and Decoration*, resulted in cases being greatly improved. Lastly, in 1911, Mr. B. T. Batsford brought out his delightful work on *Pompeian Decoration*.

That the Bungalow period was only a stepping-stone to his career is proved by the many large works which he afterwards carried out during a busy practice which extended until quite recently. His most important domestic works were the rebuilding of Cowley Manor, Gloucestershire, and Battenhall Mount, for the Hon. A. Percy Allsopp.

Briggs also was a church architect, and few people are aware that the beautiful stone-screen, altar and reredos in the Jesus Chapel, Worcester Cathedral, were erected from his designs and carried out under his own personal supervision. He was never very successful in competitions, although he was ambitious enough to submit a fine Gothic design for the Liverpool Cathedral.

In the affairs of the R.I.B.A. he did not take a very active part, but he frequently attended the meetings. He also acted as a member of the Board of Examiners for several years, under the chairmanship of the late Mr. Arthur Cates.

During the past four or five years, possibly owing to failing health, his practice seems to have gradually diminished, and with the outbreak of the war his hopes of recovering lost ground received a severe blow, but he nevertheless presented to the world a philosophic cheerfulness.

It is much to be regretted that, owing to an evident misunderstanding on the part of his relatives, sufficient notice was not given to the R.I.B.A. as to the day and hour of his burial. There appears to have been no public announcement of his funeral, and, consequently, some of his closest professional friends were prevented from paying a last tribute to his memory.

AND. N. PRENTICE [F.]

Robert Alexander Briggs was articled at the age of eighteen to Mr. G. R. Redgrave (son of Richard Redgrave, R.A.), of Broadway Chambers, Westminster, for three years. He attended lectures at the Royal Academy, and the classes and lectures at the Architectural Association.

From 1879-83 he was assistant in the offices successively of Mr. G. Moreing, Messrs. Isaacs and Florence, Mr. E. C. Lee, and Mr. J. J. O'Callaghan (Dublin). In 1883 he was awarded the Soane Medalion and £50 for a Design for an Academy of Music. He started practice in 1884 at 36 Chelsea Gardens. Among his works were the following:—House for Sir John Hall Rusholme, New Zealand; Church at Macclesfield (in conjunction with Mr. Kilbride); four bungalow houses at Bellaggio, Surrey; houses at Sutton, Northwood, Wembley, Pinner, North End, Hampstead, D'Abernon Common, Burgh Heath, Kingswood, Maidenhead, Stanmore, Lee, &c.; alterations at Queen's Gate Hall, S.W., 8 Seville Street, &c. He was the architect of the private chapel, Worcester, for the Hon. P. C. Allsopp; the memorial at Evesham to Simon de Montfort; mansion at Farnborough for Hon. J. Scott Napier, Cowley Manor House, Gloucestershire, &c. He was elected Associate of the Institute in 1882 and Fellow in 1892. Mr. Briggs was instrumental in securing for the Institute the valuable and interesting collection of drawings and designs by James Burges, A.R.A., some of which were exhibited in the Common Room a few weeks ago and described by Mr. Briggs in an article entitled "The Art of James Burges, A.R.A." (JOURNAL R.I.B.A., 19 February 1916).

CORRESPONDENCE.

Manchester Society of Architects: Official Architecture.

The Guildhall, E.C. : 15th May 1916.

To the Editor, JOURNAL R.I.B.A.

DEAR SIR,—Your readers are indebted to you for publishing on p. 230 of the JOURNAL of the 6th inst. extracts from the annual report of the above Society. It is remarkable in more ways than one. The report states: "The Manchester Society of Architects . . . represents the Royal Institute of British Architects in the Manchester district"; but as By-law 80 is to the effect that "the Royal Institute shall not be responsible for any acts . . . which may be done . . . by any Allied Society," I fail to see how the Manchester Society can claim to represent the R.I.B.A.

The Society approached the Manchester City Council asking that the City Architect should not be employed "in the future development of the City," but that the work should be given to architects in private practice. The applicants pleaded that work by officials is more costly than work executed by architects in private practice; the reasons are set out at some length, and special reference is made to school buildings.

Our Council have decided that a general discussion on official architecture shall not take place until after the publication of the Official Architecture Report; consequently I only give extracts from published information.

In 1911 a Report was published by the Board of Education on the "Abstracts of Evidence taken before the Departmental Committee on the Cost of School Buildings." This Committee held 16 meetings and examined 30 witnesses, and also visited many buildings in various parts of the country; it communicated with the Council of the R.I.B.A., and three witnesses

were nominated by our Institute. Paragraph 14 of the Report states: "The evidence . . . appears to us to illustrate the advantages which may be obtained by an intelligent study on the part of local officials of the problem of securing an efficient and sanitary school building at a minimum cost." "On the other hand, as far as ordinary Elementary School buildings are concerned, the evidence which we have received leaves on us the impression that competitions are, as a rule, a waste of time and money. It is claimed by their supporters that they not only give new men a chance, but promote progress and the introduction of new ideas. Unfortunately experience in this respect is paradoxical."

I can find nothing in the Report to suggest that an architect in private practice should be employed in preference to an official. The Report also states: "The intentions of those authorities who depend on competitions for getting the most economical and up-to-date designs are no doubt excellent, but they usually defeat themselves" (Paragraph 60).

A "Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Architects and Surveyors and Engineering Divisions of H.M. Office of Works, London," was made to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury and published in 1914 (T. Fisher Unwin, London: price 3d.). The Committee stated they had the advantage of the views of two of our Past-Presidents, and "were assured" by them "that an architect in private practice designs all the architectural details of his work with his own hand." The Report also states: "We do not feel satisfied, therefore, that, even from the purely artistic point of view, the State cannot obtain good results from the employment of an official architectural staff. From the administrative and financial point of view, the arguments for employing such a staff appear to us stronger." "The question is whether outside architects should not be employed on the more important new works. These are just the cases, however, where the employment of an official staff is cheapest—the cost, as a percentage of the expenditure on the work, falling in typical cases as low as 2 per cent. Further, as the Office of Works undertakes the maintenance and alteration of buildings in its charge, it is in many cases of advantage to the Department to have within its own walls the architects and draughtsmen associated with the original design and erection of the buildings. It seems clear, therefore, that the employment of an official staff is in many cases more convenient to the Department and involves a smaller payment for architectural services. But, further, we think that the experience of the official architects must often enable them to produce more suitable and cheaper buildings" (Paragraphs 43-44).

On 18th February 1913 the Chairman of the Establishment Committee of the London County Council stated that the cost of the staff engaged on new school buildings, including establishment charges, worked out at less than half the R.I.B.A. Scale (see JOURNAL R.I.B.A., 8th March 1913, page 315.)

Again, in the JOURNAL R.I.B.A. of 10th December 1904 (page 104) the Report of the R.I.B.A. Committee on "Municipal Officials and Architectural Work" states that questions were sent to "all the members of the Committee and to various representative architects practising in the provinces." All the Presidents of Allied Societies were on the Committee. As a result of those enquiries the R.I.B.A. Committee came to the conclusion with regard to an Official Architect's Department for local public works that, "Financially much may be said in favour of the establishment of such a department."

SYDNEY PERKS, F.S.A. [F.]

MINUTES.

At a General Meeting (Ordinary) held Monday, 15th May 1916, at 4.15 p.m.:—Present : Mr. Ernest Newton, A.R.A., President ; Mr. E. Guy Dawber, Hon. Secretary, and a number of Fellows and Associates (including 6 members of the Council)—the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held 1st May, having been published, were taken as read and signed as correct.

The Hon. Secretary having announced the decease of George Thomas Hine, *Fellow*, and Robert Alexander Briggs, *Fellow*, it was resolved that the regrets of the Institute for the loss it had sustained by the decease of its esteemed Fellows be entered in the Minutes, and that a message of sympathy and condolence be forwarded to their nearest relatives.

The Secretary announced that the following candidates had been nominated for election—viz.: As FELLOWS : George Reginald Farrow [A. 1908], Charles Edward Varnell [A. 1900, *Grissell Medallist* 1900], together with the following Licentiates who have passed the qualifying examination : Edward Cratney (Wallsend-on-Tyne), Gilbert Henry Lovegrove, Bryant Alfred Poulter, James Thomson ; As ASSOCIATES : Cyril Cliff Cheek, Henry Colbeck, James Simpson Fyfe, Charles Henry Gale, Ernest Gee, Claude Edgar Hill, James Vincent Hull, Clarence Spencer Picton, Herbert Thompson Rainger, James Wilfred Rough, Gilbert Vinden.

The proceedings closed and the meeting separated at 4.30.

NOTICES.

A GENERAL MEETING (BUSINESS) will be held on MONDAY, 5TH JUNE 1916, at 4.30 P.M. precisely, for the following purposes :—

To read the Minutes of the Meeting held Monday, 15th May 1916 ; formally to admit members and Licentiates attending for the first time.

To proceed with the election of the following candidates for membership, under By-laws 8, 9, and 10 :—

As FELLOWS (6).

FARROW : GEORGE REGINALD [Associate 1908] ; Amberley House, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C. ; and "Dinant," 75 Downton Avenue, Streatham Hill, S.W.
Proposers : W. G. Wilson, Ernest Newton, A.R.A., Howard Chatfeild Clarke.

VARNDELL : CHARLES EDWARD [Associate 1900, *Grissell Medallist* 1900] ; 1, Whitehall, S.W. ; and "Foxcote," St. Leonards Road, Surbiton.
Proposers : Robert Atkinson, W. Curtis Green, H. Austen Hall.

Together with the following Licentiates who have passed the qualifying Examination :—
CRATNEY : EDWARD ; 88 Station Road, Wallsend-on-Tyne ; and Rose Hill, Willington-on-Tyne, Northumberland.
Proposers : Henry C. Charlewood, J. A. Gotch, Jno. T. Cackett.

LOVEGROVE : GILBERT HENRY ; 374-378 Old Street, E.C. ; and 72 Hornsey Lane, Highgate, N.

Proposers : Banister F. Fletcher, Howard Chatfeild Clarke, J. Douglas Mathews.

POULTER : BRIANT ALFRED ; Craig's Court House, Whitehall, S.W. ; and "Old Dean," The Chase, Coulsdon, Surrey.
Proposers : Maurice B. Adams, W. Ravenscroft, Rowland Plumble.

THOMSON : JAMES ; City Architect, Dundee ; 324 Blackness Road, Dundee.
Proposers : P. H. Thoms, A. Lorne Campbell, John Wilson.

As ASSOCIATES (11).

[All candidates passed the Qualifying Examination last year.]
CHEEK : CYRIL CLIFF [S. 1912] ; 36 Crocketon Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.
Proposers : T. P. Figgis, Leonard Stokes, E. Guy Dawber.

COLBECK : HENRY [S. 1909] ; c/o Messrs. Moore Smith & Durrant, 14 Union Court, Old Broad Street, E.C. ; and 26 Bramley Road, Ealing, W.
Proposers : J. R. Moore-Smith, W. H. Atkin-Berry, Arthur Crow.

FYFE : JAMES SIMPSON [S. 1913] ; City Architect's Office, Town Hall, Sheffield ; and 147 Hunterhouse Road, Ecclesall.
Proposers : F. E. Pearce Edwards, Jno. Watson, F. W. Deas.

GALE : CHARLES HENRY [Special Examination], M.Inst.C.E. ; Public Works Department, Hong Kong, China.
Proposers : A. Colbourne Little, H. W. Bird, Edward A. Ram.

GEE : ERNEST [S. 1913] ; Cathedral Chambers, Chester ; and 8 Belvidere Road, Gt. Crosby, Liverpool.
Proposers : Professor C. H. Reilly and the Council.

HILL : CLAUDE EDGAR [S. 1911] ; 1/2nd London Sanitary Co. R.A.M.C. (T.) ; and 35 Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield.
Proposers : Edwd. M. Gibbs, J. B. Mitchell-Withers, S. Perkins Pick.

HULL : JAMES VINCENT [S. 1913] ; "Lofthouse," near Garsington, Lancashire.
Proposers : Professor C. H. Reilly, Charles B. Pearson, Leonard Stokes.

PICTON : CLARENCE SPENCER [S. 1913] ; 13 Queen Anne's Gate, S.W. ; and 73 St. Donat's Road, New Cross, S.E.
Proposers : J. W. Stanley Burmester, Professor Beresford Pite, E. H. Bourchier.

RAINGER : HERBERT THOMSON [Special Examination] ; Sibbersfield, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.
Proposers : H. W. Chatters, E. Guy Dawber, and the Council.

ROUGH : JAMES WILFRED [Special Examination] ; Invercargill, New Zealand.
Proposers : The Council.

VINDEN : GILBERT [S. 1912] ; 57 Eastern Avenue, Reading.
Proposers : W. Roland Howell, Chas. Steward Smith, Geo. W. Webb.

On View in the Common Room.

A Collection of Drawings of old work and Sketches and Designs by the late CHARLES EDWARD MALLOWS, F.R.I.B.A., kindly lent by his widow.

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